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Interview of Dr. Louis Hempelmann by Dr. Marks and Mr. Miazga at 10 AM on 5/1/74. The interview was held in Dr. Hempelmann's office. Dr. Hempelmann is Professor of Radiology in the University of Rochester School of Medicine. He was leader of the Health Division at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory (LASL) from 1943 to 1948. Since then he has participated in a follow-up study of a group of persons having substantial body burdens of plutonium as a result of occupational exposure at LASL.

Dr. Hempelmann indicated that he had little knowledge of the plutonium experiment as carried out in Rochester. He also stated that he knew very little about the work going on in Chicago and Berkeley at that time.

Dr. Hempelmann was asked about a meeting that was described as occurring

late in March by Dr. Wright Langham in a few of Dr. Langham's papers.

The meeting was said to include Drs. Hymer Friedell, Joseph Kennedy of

the Los Alamos Chemistry Division, Wright Langham and Hempelmann and

occurred late in March 1945. Dr. Langham wrote that the meeting resulted

in a lowering of the maximum permissible body burden of plutonium. However,

the need to conduct a study in which a hospital patient at either Rochester

or Chicago would be injected with plutonium and the excreta sent to

Los Alamos for analysis was also apparently discussed at the same meeting,

which preceded the first injections by only a few weeks. Dr. Hempelmann

discussed at the meeting the need for injection of the patient
reported the latter in a memo to Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer. However, when we

reviewed
showed that memo to Dr. Hempelmann, he could not recall the meeting clearly

of that particular discussion.

Dr. Hempelmann discussed the justification for the concern about protection of personnel against plutonium contamination at that time.

He said that kilogram amounts of plutonium started to arrive at the Los Alamos Laboratory from Hanford in about March of 1945. This created a need to establish more reliable means of estimating body burdens in exposed workers. The facilities for working with the plutonium were very crude at that time and remained so until the fall of 1945 when the plutonium work was transferred to a new building. Dr. Hempelmann did recall that

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7-1* Dr. Friedell was at Los Alamos twice; he picked Dr. Friedell up in his car on those occasions. However, Dr. Hempelmann did not recall the dates of those visits or the relationship to meetings.

Dr. Hempelmann said that Dr. Warren wanted the plutonium study done at Rochester because Dr. Warren claimed that Rochester had an excellent metabolic ward. Later when Dr. Hempelmann had occasion to visit Rochester he found that there was only a small two-bed unit which did not appear impressive. However, the principal study in the human plutonium experiment was carried out at Rochester.

The detailed Rochester plan was shown to Dr. Hempelmann but he failed to recall the plan and was unable to discuss it. Dr. Hempelmann had indicated in an earlier phone conversation that he and Dr. Langham had averted this matter as much as possible after a flap developed about it in AEC in about 1948.

From about June until August 1945, Dr. Hempelmann said that he was heavily involved in the Trinity shot at Alamogordo. He implied that this activity led to a loss of contact with the plutonium experiment. Furthermore,

Dr. Langham carried out the Los Alamos end of the plutonium experiment which was a joint Rochester-
Los Alamos ~~experiment~~ *venture*.